

Janet T. Mills
Governor

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Commissioner



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August 10, 2020

Dear Resource Parents,

We are writing to provide guidance regarding children in foster care and education plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

Individual School district plans, in response to Covid-19, have yet to be finalized in many school districts. Most children will benefit from being in a structured school setting, especially children who require Individual Education Plans (IEP) and those children who have experienced trauma.

We recognize that every situation is different, and Resource Parents need to be consulted with and have input in developing educational plans for the children in your home. According to American Academy of Pediatrics schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits. We ask that when possible, children in care attend school the maximum time offered provided by the school district; however, we recognize that each child and resource home has individualized needs. We support making a plan that meets the needs of both.

School/Education plans for each child in care will be developed with the resource parents in consultation with the caseworker, parents and Tribal representation in ICWA cases taking into account the:

- Consideration of the wishes of the resource parents
- Consideration of the wishes of the parents
- Needs and wishes of the youth (when appropriate)
- Recommendations of the Tribe
- COVID plans
- Resource family's health needs
- Child care
- Supervision
- Educational support
- Child's health and educational needs
- Immunization requirements (catchup clinics are available throughout the state)

Sincerely,

Bobbi L. Johnson, LMSW
Associate Director of Child Welfare Services
Office of Child and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services